



PEMPAL TREASURY COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (TCOP)

Minutes of the TCOP Executive Committee Meeting July 15, 2020

A regular meeting of the PEMPAL TCOP Executive Committee (ExCom) took place on July 15, 2020 in the videoconference (VC) format.

The meeting was attended by: Ms. Angela Voronin (TCOP Chair, MoF, Moldova), Ms. Lyudmila Gurianova (Deputy Chair, MoF, Belarus), Mr. Ilyas Tufan (Deputy Chair, MoTF, Turkey), Mr. Nazim Gasimzade (MoF, Azerbaijan), Ms. Mimoza Pilkati (MoF, Albania), Mr. Levan Todua (MoF, Georgia), Mr. Alexandr Demidov and Ms. Anna Alekseeva (Federal Treasury of Russia), and Aigul Baiguzhina represented the Treasury Committee of Kazakhstan. The World Bank was represented by Ms. Elena Nikulina (TCOP Coordinator), Ms. Yelena Slizhevskaya (TCOP Adviser), Ms. Galina Kuznetsova (Secretariat Coordinator), and Ms. Ekaterina Zaleeva (PEMPAL Secretariat).

Summary of Discussion

1. Update on the current situation with COVID-19 and its implications for the PEMPAL events, including plans for the dates of the annual plenary meeting

Ms. Angela Voronin opened the meeting and invited its participants for discussion. The ExCom members shared information on the mode of operation of the treasuries in their respective countries: in majority of the countries the treasuries are gradually returning or had returned to the regular mode of operation (Belarus, Georgia, Russia and Turkey), with lockdown or partial home-based work (HBW) arrangements still in effect in Azerbaijan, Moldova and Kazakhstan. The ExCom members reiterated their interest in further knowledge and experience exchange under PEMPAL as well as their readiness to continue to participate in PEMPAL events remotely. Ms. Elena Nikulina added that WB staff is still on HBW with limited access to the WB premises where VCs with simultaneous interpretation had been held; therefore, the Secretariat would continue arranging VC sessions using the KUDO alternative.

As uncertainty regarding the epidemiological situation continues, the TCOP leadership decided to postpone the TCOP plenary in Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan) till the next calendar year, with exact dates to be further defined.

2. Update on the TCOP activities held since the last Executive Committee meeting

2.1. Videoconference on the treasuries response to COVID-19 (April 29, 2020)

Ms. Angela Voronin provided a brief account of the videoconference (VC) held on April 29, 2020, which was the first TCOP event after the start of COVID-19 pandemic. This was the first

VC that used a new platform, and despite some issues with technology the outcomes of the follow-up survey suggested that the participants were very much keen to have such virtual meetings on a regular basis in order to share knowledge and discuss issues of interest. Members of the ExCom and the Resource Team also stressed that such post-event surveys previously were conducted only after face-to-face meetings. Since virtual meetings will be the main channel of interaction between countries in the days ahead, the Leadership Group and the Resource Team agreed to extend such post-event surveys to VCs – so that to obtain timely feedback from participants.

2.2. Videoconference of the Thematic Group on Public Sector Accounting and Reporting on the new knowledge product on optimization of the Chart of Accounts (CoA) (June 4, 2020)

Ms. Angela Voronin provided a brief account of a VC held on June 4 during which Mr. Mark Silins presented a new version of knowledge product (KP) on optimization of the CoA design and the participants shared their comments on the KP as well as their experience how the TCOP countries had adjusted their CoAs to record COVID-19-related revenues and expenditures.

Ms. Ludmila Gurianova noted that the document on integration of the CoA and the economic segment of the budget classification developed by Mr. Silins in 2014 proved extremely useful for the Treasury of Belarus. The new KP presented in June covers a broader range of issues which was hard to review given the relatively short notice and it was hard to fit the discussion during one VC. Ms. Gurianova suggested to arrange additional VC(s) to address specific sections of the document or CoA segments, - these could include program segment and program outcomes information, or economic segment. The Leadership Group supported this proposal and requested the Resource Team to solicit by the end of July additional proposals from the thematic group members regarding issues that would be of interest to the TCOP in order to define topics for a possible VC.

2.3. Videoconference with the Swiss Federal Treasury (June 24, 2020)

Mr. Ilyas Tufan, Co-Chair of the Cash Management Thematic Group, provided a brief account of the VC held on June 24, and stressed that the TCOP expressed a lot of interest in the Swiss experience during Q&A session after the main presentation. Ms. Nikulina explained that the VC was the first one in a series of three VCs with Swiss representatives which were arranged by Thomas Stauffer (SECO) for each of the COPs instead of the cancelled face-to-face PEMPAL Cross-COP Leadership meeting (originally planned for early July). Ms. Nikulina also commented that the post-VC survey revealed that the majority of the participants had successfully gotten used to the new KUDO platform, and this is a positive development for the prospects of the future virtual events.

3. Discussion on TCOP activities suggested for July-December 2020

Ms. Voronin indicated that in the coming six months the TCOP activities are likely to be limited to the virtual events only and invited the members of the Leadership Group to discuss potential topics and dates. Proposals put forward by the participants included the following:

3.1. VC of the Thematic Group on the Treasury Role and Functions to present experience of the Treasury Committee of Kazakhstan

Ms. Aigul Baiguzhina proposed to organize one or two VCs with the Treasury of Kazakhstan to familiarize the TCOP members with the country's experience since the TCOP plenary meeting which was originally planned to be held in Kazakhstan was moved to 2021. The Leadership Group supported the idea. During the discussion that followed the ExCom members suggested that representatives of the Treasury Committee of Kazakhstan present the role, functions and organizational structure of the Treasury, as well as cover performance indicators used by the Treasury and the arrangements for managing the National Fund of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The ExCom members agreed that after such introductory presentation the TCOP members would be better informed to suggest the topics for a potential additional VC with Kazakhstan colleagues. The VC was tentatively scheduled for September 15, 2020, draft presentation to be submitted to the Resource Team for comments by the end of July.

3.2. Videoconference of the Thematic Group on the Public Sector Accounting and Reporting to discuss the new knowledge product on optimizing the CoA design

Ms. Nikulina reminded that by the end of October Mr. Silins plans to finalize the document regarding CoA optimization, and its final version could be presented during one of the TCOP VCs. Ms. Voronin added that in case the TCOP members express their interest in discussing selected sections of the document or selected CoA segments, such VC could be arranged for those interested. The Leadership Group suggested to schedule such VC for October-November 2020.

3.3. Videoconference of the Thematic Group on the Use of Information Technologies (IT) in Treasury Operations (news session)

Ms. Nukulina noted that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased the workload of the treasuries' staff and of the staff of respective IT support units – during this period many countries were promptly introducing remote work arrangements and converting transactions into electronic formats (in case it had not been done earlier). Ms. Nikulina suggested to have a virtual news session during which the participants could share their experience and discuss issues of interest. Mr. Gasimzade, Co-Chair of the Thematic Group, supported the idea and confirmed that over the past few months the Treasury of Azerbaijan had to revise some of their business processes due to the pandemic, and he is ready to share the experience with colleagues. The Leadership Group agreed to schedule such VC for October-November 2020.

3.4. Activities of the Thematic Group on Cash Management

Ms. Nikulina commented that the virtual format of the TCOP events is well-suited for conducting surveys and working on knowledge products on cash management and forecasting. One similar survey had already been conducted several years ago and covered whether the countries have Treasury Single Accounts (TSA) and what are their coverage. Ms. Nikulina proposed to run an updated survey this fall in order to track the progress of reforms in PEMPAL countries. Mr. Tufan, co-chair of the Thematic Group, supported the idea and stressed that the topic is very relevant for ongoing reforms in Turkey. Ms. Nikulina suggested that the TCOP Resource Team will additionally discuss with the Thematic Group leaders and the TCOP experts any further steps needed to arrange such survey.

3.5. Other TCOP activities

Ms. Voronin suggested to organize another VC in December 2020 to take stock of the year's accomplishments, the format of the VC would be similar to a news session and might to some extent compensate for the lack of face-to-face interaction. The ExCom members agreed to discuss this idea in more detail during the next ExCom meeting.

4. Information on the outcomes of the Steering Committee meeting on July 8, 2020, and other cross-COP events

Ms. Voronin briefed the ExCom members on the recent meeting of the PEMPAL Steering Committee with a special focus on the ongoing external evaluation of the PEMPAL network. Ms. Voronin thanked the ExCom members for their readiness to devote time and participate in the interviews conducted by the external evaluator (the majority of the interviews have been completed, some are scheduled for the near time). Ms. Nikulina informed the meeting participants that as part of the external evaluation the participants of the PEMPAL events will be asked to respond to a web-based survey in fall. The evaluation outcomes will be presented for discussion at the Steering Committee meeting in October 2020.

5. Other questions

Ms. Elena Nikulina reminded that the annual elections of the ExCom chair will be announced by the PEMPAL Secretariat in the second half of August. As always, the elections will be performed in two stages. Ms. Voronin invited the interested ExCom members to come up with their nominations.

The final version of the induction kit for new participants was presented to the ExCom members, Ms. Nikulina invited the ExCom members to review it and provide their comments and suggestions - if any - to the Resource Team. It was stressed that the booklet is not only targeted to new PEMPAL members but could also be used as reference material for the current members, as it contains links to topics and documents discussed over the course of the TCOP operation. Ms. Nikulina informed that the booklet will be published on the TCOP webpage of the PEMPAL website and will be updated on a quarterly basis.

Ms. Nikulina informed the TCOP ExCom members of the interest of representatives of the Executive Committee of the Forum of State Treasures of Latin America (FOTEGAL) to learn about operation of the PEMPAL TCOP and their suggestion to share the experience during a joint VC. The ExCom members supported the request and suggested to schedule such VC for late September 2020.

The next ExCom meeting was tentatively scheduled for October 2020.

Key Meeting Outcomes and Decisions

- To postpone the TCOP plenary meeting in Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan) for CY2021, the exact dates will be confirmed additionally;
- To extend the practice of conducting post-event evaluation surveys for the TCOP VCs;
- To include the following events into the tentative TCOP plan for July-December 2020:
 - VC of the Thematic Group on the Treasury Role and Functions with presentation of experience of the Treasury Committee of Kazakhstan (September 15, 2020);
 - VC of the Thematic Group on Public Sector Accounting and Reporting on a new knowledge product on optimization of the CoA design (presentation of the final version and/or discussion of selected sections that present the most interest to participants (October-November 2020);
 - VC of the Thematic Group on the Use of IT in Treasury Operations (news session) (October-November 2020);
 - A survey on TSA and cash management practices (late fall 2020);
- To initiate preparation of a joint VC between the leadership teams of the PEMPAL TCOP FOTEGAL (tentatively – second half of September 2020);
- The next ExCom meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 2020.